

Message Text

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10

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SCEM-02 TRSE-00 INT-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 COME-00

OMB-01 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 SS-15 AID-20 RSR-01

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R 202156Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 614

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 6302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG PBOR VE CO

SUBJECT: POSSIBILITY OF OIL EXPLORATION IN GULF OF VENEZUELA

REF: CARACAS 5626

1. THIS MORNING I DREW A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM MINISTER OF MINES AND HYDROCARBONS WHEN I CAST A LIGHT FLY IN HIS DIRECTION ON POSSIBILITY OF GOING AHEAD WITH EXPLORING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN NON-DISPUTED PARTS OF THE GULF OF VENEZUELA. PEREZ LA SALVIA REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT A LEGAL EXPERT, HE THOUGHT GOV WOULD NOT WISH TO GO AHEAD WITH ANY EXPLORATION UNTIL THE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH COLOMBIA HAD BEEN JURIDICALLY SETTLED. HE SAID THAT TO PERMIT PETROLEUM EXPLORATION TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF MIGHT PREJUDICE VENEZUELA'S CASE VIS-A-VIS COMOBIA.

2. MINISTER WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT A MORE PROMISING FIELD OF EXPLORATION WOULD BE IN ORINOCO DELTA, WHICH WAS CLEARLY WITHIN NATIONAL JURISDICTION AND WHERE PRELIMINARY EXPLORATIONS HAD REVEALED SEDIMENTARY DEPOSITS WHICH MIGHT INDEED HOLD OIL OF EASY ACCESSIBILITY. AS FOR THE ORINOCO BELT, CVP HAD ALREADY PUT DOWN 14 EXPLORATORY WELLS AND WAS
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CONTINUING ITS EVALUATION OF THAT VAST RESERVE.

3. HE AGREED WITH ME THAT AFTER THE VENEZUELAN ELECTIONS
WE MIGHT GET TOGETHER ON A GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT BASIS
AND EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN AGREEMENT AS TO OUR LONG-
RANGE PETROLEUM INTERESTS, BOTH VENEZUELAN AND AMERICAN.
MCCLINTOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973CARACA06302
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS MCCLINTOCK
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730721/aaaaapen.tel
Line Count: 67
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 CARACAS 5626
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18-Jan-2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <08 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBILITY OF OIL EXPLORATION IN GULF OF VENEZUELA
TAGS: ENRG, PBOR, VE, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005